

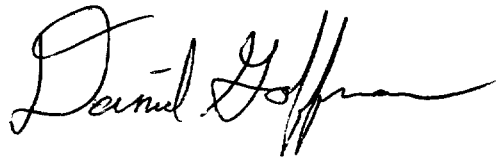
**The Struggle for Autocracy Against the Assyrian Empire:  
A Brief History and Analysis of Ancient Texts**

**An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)**

**by**

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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daniel Goffman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Daniel" and last name "Goffman" clearly distinguishable.

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## Abstract

This examination of the events surrounding the rise and height of the Assyrian Empire compares different primary sources including Assyrian texts, Hebrew texts, and archaeology. This paper is a brief summary, analysis, and explanation of the events, or possible events in the Ancient Near East during the time period of c.900-700 BCE.

## Acknowledgements

My deepest thanks goes out to Dr. Goffman, my thesis advisor, for his role in this process. He challenged me to think objectively and critically view writer biases. He was extremely patient during this slow, rigorous, and many times frustrating process and provided superior editorial advice.

My sincerest appreciation and gratitude also goes out to all my friends and family who were so supportive during this year-long process. My roommates were forever patient during times of frustration and organized chaos. Thanks to David for reminding me to relax in the midst of stress. My deepest appreciation goes out to my sister Kelly who inspired me, encouraged me, and provided a constant place of refuge. Thanks to those of you who helped edit, encourage, and helped me keep my sanity through this year.

*I wrote this paper as a topic of interest to see how the Hebrew Scriptures compared to other ancient texts and existing archaeological finds. While I will discuss and compare certain passages of various ancient texts, my intent is not to prove the validity of the ancient Hebrew or Assyrian texts as sources. Entire books have been devoted to these topics and it seems redundant and ignorant to write a mere paper claiming to prove or disprove these as valid or reliable sources. My intent is to discuss the events of this time period based on their assumed historicity, reliability, and validity. A discussion of what I believe can or cannot be concretely derived from the Hebrew, Assyrian, and archaeological sources can be found in the conclusion. This paper discusses the events and dating of the rise of the Assyrian Empire to its height and the decline of the Hebrew nation climaxing at the time of confrontation between these two factions in Judah at the time of King Hezekiah and Assyrian Emperor Sennacherib.*

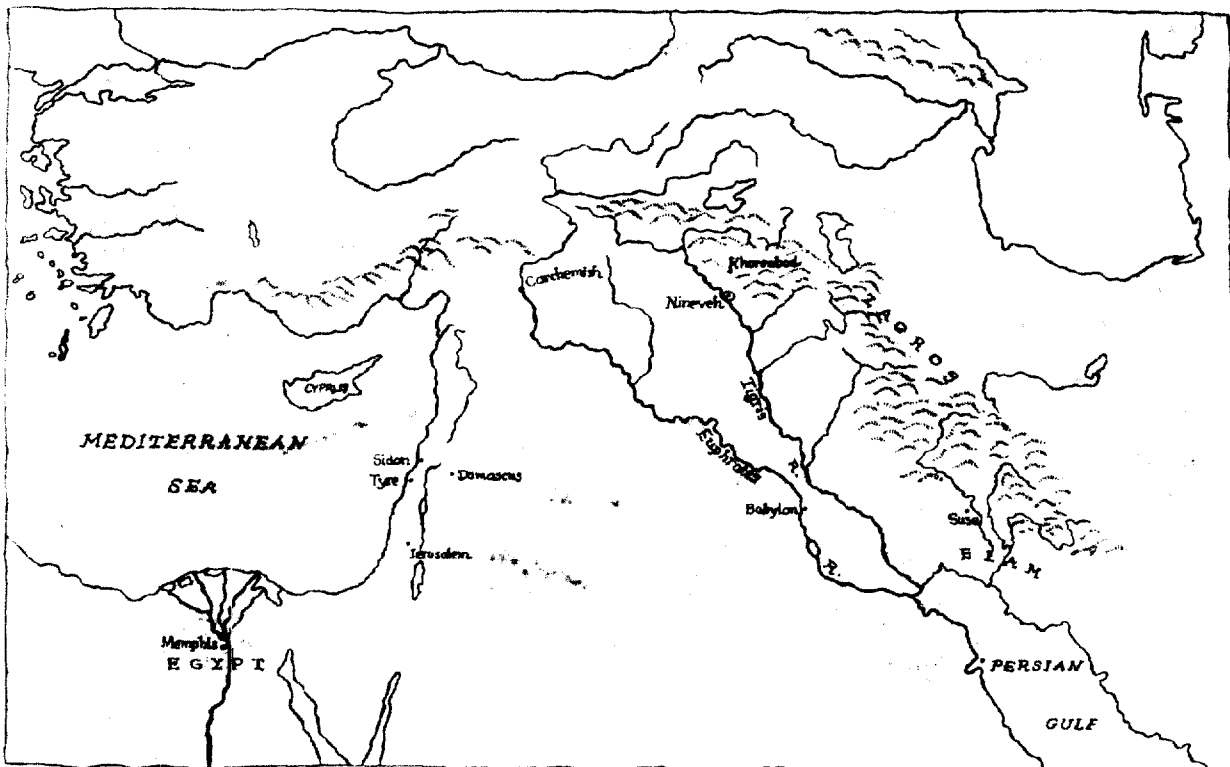
The Ancient Hebrew or Jewish nation<sup>1</sup> is unique in that it describes a political, ethnic, and religious affiliation. This national identity effectively put all cultural, political, and religious control under one head—the king. The ancient Hebrews were monotheistic and believed that their god, the Lord God or YHWH<sup>2</sup>, made a covenant with them. If the Jews followed YHWH's commands and were loyal to YHWH alone, YHWH would protect them and provide for their needs. These commands were more than what is now called the Ten Commandments; these commands (from the Hebrew Scriptures of Leviticus) governed everything from the food the Hebrews ate to religious ceremonies and feasts. Since nearly all aspects of Hebrew life were governed by the YHWH religion, culture and religion became one entity. As culture was governed by religion, the king was expected to base his political policies on the YHWH religion in order to continue pleasing YHWH.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper nation is defined as an ethnic, political, or religious identification with a group of people.

<sup>2</sup> The ancient Hebrews felt even the name of their god was sacred, so they removed all vowels from the name to make it impossible to misuse. YHWH, depending on vowel placement, can either be pronounced Yahweh or Jehovah.

The Hebrew nation remained one political entity until 920 BCE when it split into two political factions: Israel and Judah. Israel consisted of the northern ten tribes; the tribes of Judah and Benjamin made up the Judean kingdom. Despite continuous wars between the two political factions, these two kingdoms prospered amidst a vacuum of international power until the rise of the Assyrian Empire challenged their autonomy.



Roberts. 1997

In 745 BCE, an Assyrian general, known as Pul in Hebrew texts took the throne. Upon becoming king, he changed his name to Tilgath-Pileser III after a famous Assyrian conquering king. He unified all the warring Assyrian factions and began to



<http://ancienthistory.miningco.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.bible.ca/maps/>

[http://www.rain.org/~turnpike/legend-lessons/divided\\_map.html](http://www.rain.org/~turnpike/legend-lessons/divided_map.html)

build a formidable empire. He defeated the Babylonians and the Medes<sup>3</sup> to the East, the Kingdom of Urartu to the North, Eastern Asia Minor, Phoenicia (Tyre), and Syria (Damascus) to the West.

<sup>3</sup> A people of Northwest Iran who in the 9th century BCE were tributaries to Assyria, with their capital at Ecbatana (now Hamadán), in the ancient Southwestern Asian country of Media.

The Assyrian kings beginning with Tilglath-Pileser III quickly expanded the empire by conquest. There is evidence that with each victory they added divisions of the conquered army to their strength. An example of such evidence is found in the records of Sargon II:

I smashed like a flood-storm the country of Hamath(A-ma-at-tu) in its entire [extent].... From these (prisoners) I [Sargon II] set [up a troop] of 300 chariots (and) 600 moun[t]ed men] equipped with leather shields and lan[ces], and ad[ded them] to my royal corps. ...At the begi[nning of my royal rule, I [besieged, conquered] the town of the Sama]rians ... I led away as prisoners 27,290 inhabitants of it (and) [equipped] from among [them (soldiers to man)] 50 chariots for my royal corps. ...In the fifth year of my rule, Pisiri of Carchemish broke the oath sworn by the great gods...And the rebellious inhabitants of Carchemish who (had sided) with him, I led away as prisoners and brought (them) to Assyria. I formed from among them a contingent of 50 chariots, 200 men on horseback, (and) 3,000 foot soldiers and added (it) to my royal corps.

Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 284-285

Additional evidence of this Assyrian practice also lies in the reliefs<sup>4</sup> discovered at Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, as well as the archaeological dig at Lachish.

The reliefs depict several different styles of dress, hair, and beard amongst the Assyrian soldiers. These distinctions may identify different ethnic divisions. [Shanks, 1984] There are other possibilities as well. The differences in dress and hair could be indications of rank, station in society, or specific occupation (archer, charioteer, infantry, etc). Archaeologist David Ussishkin is one of the many people working to unlock the mysteries of this time period and culture.

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<sup>4</sup> A common practice was to record important events by carving the scenes in stone. Many Assyrian reliefs were discovered in the palace at Nineveh by Sir Henry Layard in the mid 1800s. (See Lachish reliefs Appendix C)

During the dig at Lachish, Ussishkin's team uncovered 157 arrowheads in two excavation squares. All were made of iron save one, which was carved out of bone. The arrowheads were not all uniform in shape; there were several different types represented. Ussishkin believes the variety could indicate the participation of different ethnic groups in the attack. [1987] If artisans were hired to make the arrowheads for the Assyrian army, the variety could also represent the variations in the patterns the artisans used.

Many scholars who have studied the Assyrians believe them to be the fiercest and most brutal army. There is little evidence of their exceptional brutality however, as many of the tortures inflicted upon high-ranking prisoners (kings, city officials, etc) were common to other cultures as well. Flaying (skinning the person alive) was a common practice used by both the Aztecs and the Mayans. Hanging (impaling on a stick, not from a noose around the neck) was a common death punishment used by the Persians. The Assyrian practices pale in comparison to the Aztec religious ceremony<sup>5</sup> of cutting out the beating heart of a prisoner.

While Assyrians were open about their cruelties, these punishments were reserved only for those who resisted Assyrian rule. While such kingdoms were treated harshly, kingdoms that did not resist were merely incorporated into the Assyrian Empire as vassal states. It should also be noted that while male captives were treated harshly, women and children captives were treated humanely. It was also forbidden for Assyrian soldiers to rape captive women. [Roberts, 1997; Pritchard, 1955] This does not

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<sup>5</sup> Hunt, 1999

necessarily mean that the rules were always followed, but it is an indication of the written intent of Assyrian rules of engagement.



Roberts, 1997

A tiny part of a much larger relief dramatizing the conquest of the Judean city of Lachish by Sennacherib shows three men impaled on stakes, one of the Assyrians' favored modes of execution for their enemies. Another was thrusting a living enemy into a furnace.



Aztecs flayed captives and donned the skin of the sacrificial victim. (Hunt, 1999)

Assyrian rulers kept detailed records in the capital of Babylon—later in Nineveh—of the battles they fought, including cruelties to defeated nations. Hanging, flaying, and other forms of excruciating death were not uncommon practices at this time; the Assyrians were just one of the few groups to record their own cruel practices. Usually, the victims recorded the atrocities of their aggressors, but the Assyrians seemingly used these records as a warning to discourage a revolt or any other opposition to the empire. [Wilson, 1977; Roberts, 1997] Scholars believe the Assyrians to be the fiercest and most cruel army based on the records found to date. The fact that the Assyrians recorded their cruelty to city officials and captured soldiers is not a legitimate prerequisite for a reputation as the fiercest and most brutal army as some



scholars would have the public believe—especially when the practices used were common in other cultures. Extraordinarily cruel or not, the skill of the Assyrian army far exceeded that of any in the Ancient Near East and Egypt.

The Assyrians combined many methods of warfare in battle: battering rams, earth ramparts (also known as siege ramps), mobile towers for archers, ladders, slings, archers, spearmen, and charioteers were all a part of the arsenal of the Assyrian army. The Assyrians had a unique strategy that accounted for much of their success. After the siege ramp was built, they began an offensive in which five forms of assault skillfully occurred simultaneously:

- (1) Archers, protected by shields and coats of mail, fired volleys of arrows at the defenders from the ground and mobile towers;
- (2) Soldiers dug tunnels beneath the city wall;
- (3) Armored sappers used pikes and spears to demolish the low wall;
- (4) Storming parties mounted ladders to scale the wall;
- (5) Mobile towers and battering rams were pushed up the siege ramp to shoot men on the wall while trying to punch a hole through it.



Assyrian relief depicting a typical siege on a fortified city. (Yadin, 1984)

The battering ram (pictured above) was the most horrifying weapon in ancient warfare. Within the battering ram, two soldiers pushed a heavy wooden shaft that was suspended from the ceiling of the turret like a pendulum. [Yadin, 1984] This machine was the most feared and hated piece of offensive weaponry of the time, as it was capable of destroying the walls of even the largest fortresses. The Assyrians used it effectively in combination with other forms of warfare transforming previously protective fortress walls into walled traps with no hope for escape. Hence, powerful alliances were necessary if a country was to defy Assyrian rule. This large, powerful, and methodical army is what the Hebrews and other kingdoms had to defeat in order to maintain autonomy.

At the same time that Tilglath-Pileser III was gaining power in Assyria, Israel was self-destructing into a state of near anarchy. Six different kings sat on the throne during this time; two of whom were assassinated within six months of their succession. This internal struggle for power threw the kingdom into political chaos, leaving Israel in no position to respond to the Assyrian threat. In addition to political chaos, an alternate religion, Ba'al<sup>6</sup> worship, further deteriorated a Hebrew national identity based on the traditions and worship of YHWH.

Pekah took the Israeli throne in 736 BCE, ending political chaos, and immediately launched an anti-Assyrian campaign in the desire to eliminate the impending Assyrian threat. He formed a military alliance with Rezin, the king of Damascus (the territory of Syria—also known as Aram). He also attempted to recruit Jotham, king of Judah, but Jotham refused to become involved for unstated reasons.

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<sup>6</sup> A Canaanite or Phoenician title given to the chief male gods who were worshiped as fertility gods, often of orgiastic or phallic character, and were strongly denounced by the Hebrew prophets.

Not allowing any kingdom to remain neutral, Pekah organized an attack on Jotham aided by Judah's long-standing enemies: Rezin, Edom<sup>7</sup> to the South, and the Philistines<sup>8</sup> to the West.

During this process, Jotham suddenly died for unknown reasons and his son Ahaz succeeded him at the age of twenty. The young and inexperienced Ahaz could not fend off the coalition of armies led by Pekah which laid siege to Jerusalem, the Judean capital, and plundered it. This easy defeat encouraged further raids of Judean towns by the Edomites and Philistines. Ahaz, knowing he could not maintain his kingdom without assistance, petitioned Tilglath-Pileser III for help. Ahaz took gold and silver from the temple of YHWH and treasures from the palace to send to Assyria as a gift. He sent these with messengers saying, "I am your servant and vassal. Come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Aram and of the king of Israel who are attacking me." (2 Kings 16:7) Tilglath-Pileser III responded by attacking Damascus, capturing it, and putting Rezin to death. Thus began Judah's subjugation as a vassal of Assyria.

When Ahaz sought protection from Assyria, he willingly accepted vassal status to the Assyrian throne. In ancient Near Eastern culture, each nation had a patron deity as defender and protector of that country and people. Traditionally, the Hebrew deity was YHWH; the Assyrians worshipped Asshur as their chief lord and master. Subjugation of another country meant the gods of the superior country prevailed over the gods of the inferior. As a vassal of Assyrian rule, Ahaz was expected to acknowledge Asshur as Judah's patron deity. Ahaz showed his acknowledgement by shutting down the temples

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<sup>7</sup> An ancient country of Palestine inhabited by a Semitic people, the Edomites, between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. The Edomites are traditionally known as descendants of Esau.

<sup>8</sup> An Aegean people who settled into organized city-states on the Mediterranean coastline around the 12th century BCE. They are also known as the Phoenicians or "Sea People," who were well-established as navigators and traders.

of YHWH, ending YHWH worship, and promoting Ba'al worship in its place with Asshur as the head deity.

Ahaz died in 715 BCE and his son Hezekiah took the throne at the age of twenty-five. He continued to pay tribute to Assyria, but began to make internal religious changes in Judah with the intent of recombining and centralizing religion and government in Jerusalem while reestablishing traditional Hebrew nationalism under YHWHistic worship and rejecting Asshur as Judah's patron deity. Within "the first month of the first year of his reign, [Hezekiah] opened the doors of the temple of the LORD (YHWH) and repaired them." (2 Chronicles 29:3) Hezekiah assembled the YHWH priests and told them of his intentions in verses four through eleven to consecrate the temple of YHWH and reopen it. (See Appendix B) In this speech to the Levites<sup>9</sup>, he presented the subjugation of Judah to Assyria as a direct result of the unfaithfulness of their forefathers to YHWH. Hezekiah's solution to regaining autonomy from the Assyrians was to consecrate and reopen the temple, make a covenant with the LORD, and resume YHWH worship. (2 Chronicles 29:4-10) Gradually rebuilding Hebrew nationalism, Hezekiah oversaw sweeping religious reforms and centralized all worship in Jerusalem. [Shanks, 1975; Josephus, 1987; Bible, 1988]

The Levites spent sixteen days purifying and consecrating the temple. While they were preparing to reopen the temple, Hezekiah ordered the destruction of all other forms as well as all other places of worship (including places of YHWH worship). This accomplished his goal of recentralizing religious control in Jerusalem. Hezekiah "removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles.

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<sup>9</sup> The Levites, descended from Levi, were the only Israelite tribe allowed to perform priestly duties of YHWH worship.

He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.)” (2 Kings 18:4) Upon completion, Hezekiah and the city officials brought animals to be sacrificed as offerings at the altar of YHWH. The people of Judah gathered in Jerusalem for this massive celebration and ceremony; they worshipped YHWH for the first time since Ahaz shut the doors of the temple. They also celebrated Passover, even though it was a month later than the time appointed. [Bible, 1988; Thompson, 1987; Josephus, 1987] Hezekiah used this traditional celebration as propaganda to remind the Hebrews how YHWH had protected them and to restore confidence in YHWH worship.<sup>10</sup>

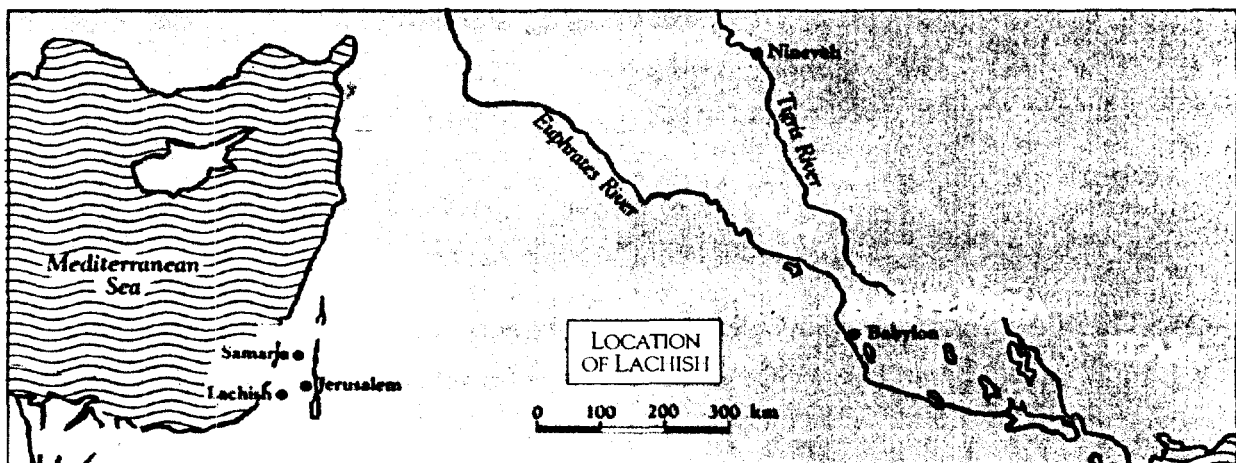
Within the first four years of Hezekiah’s reign he not only transformed Judah’s entire religious policy, but its foreign policy as well. He ended Judah’s attitude of pacification towards the Philistine city-states in the southwest, a political situation inherited from Ahaz. He drove them back to the coast and reoccupied all the cities the Philistines had taken from Judah during the reign of Jotham and Ahaz. He also stopped paying tribute, an open proclamation of active rebellion, to the Assyrian King Shalmaneser V, who had succeeded Tilglath-Pileser III, despite Assyrian threats against his kingdom. [Ussishkin, 1979]

While Hezekiah was transforming the Judean kingdom, a rebellion was exploding in the Ancient Near East in the vassal states’ desire to regain autonomy. It is unclear what Hezekiah’s exact role was; however it is certain that he ceased in his duties as an Assyrian vassal. It appears that his statement of rebellion began a large-scale chain reaction that created chaos for Assyrian King Shalmaneser V in the Near East.

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<sup>10</sup> Exodus 12

Ashdod, Israel, several Philistine city-states, Tyre, and Syria rejected vassal status under Assyrian rule. Shalmaneser V was informed that Hoshea, who had succeeded Pekah as king of Israel, privately sent a message to So, king of Egypt, requesting his assistance. They formed an alliance and Hoshea also ceased paying tribute to the king of Assyria. Unwilling to release control of his vassal states, Shalmaneser V immediately began a campaign against the belligerent countries. When Shalmaneser V attacked Ashdod, its king appealed for, and was denied, help from Judah. These correspondences hint at the loosely organized large-scale rebellion against the Assyrian Empire.



Roberts, 1997

By 724 BCE Shalmaneser V had captured all Israel except Samaria, its capital, and “when he was not admitted [into the city] by the king [Hoshea], he besieged Samaria three years, and took it by force...” (Ussishkin, 1987). The Egyptian assistance Israel depended on never arrived and in 721 BCE Samaria fell, but not to Shalmaneser V. He died during the three-year-long siege and his successor Sargon II took credit for his victory as recorded in Assyrian records:

I [Sargon II] besieged and conquered Samaria (Sa-me-ri-na), led away as booty 27,290 inhabitants of it. I formed from among them a contingent of 50 chariots and made remaining (inhabitants) assume their (social) positions. I installed over them an officer of mine and imposed upon them the tribute of the former king.

Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 285

Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up to attack Hoshea, who had been Shalmaneser's vassal and had paid him tribute. But the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea was a traitor, for he had sent envoys to So king of Egypt, and he no longer paid tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore Shalmaneser seized him and put him in prison. The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria and laid siege to it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes.

2 Kings 17:1-6

Sargon II never mentions how long the siege lasted; in fact, the surviving Assyrian texts never reveal how Shalmaneser V died in the siege. The only mention of Shalmaneser V in existing Assyrian texts is in the listings of Assyrian kings, which may mean he either did not survive long enough to return to Nineveh to record his conquests, they were destroyed and new records were created, or they have yet to be discovered. The Hebrew texts allude to an unknown different Assyrian king in power on their defeat as Hebrew Scriptures continue referring to Shalmaneser V until the deportation of the Israelites, where it merely refers to "the king of Assyria". The Assyrian texts never refer to where any of the captured inhabitants were relocated. The Assyrian texts merely report how many were led away and how many were "added to the royal corps". The only information that can be concretely derived from the combination of both

texts is that Samaria was conquered by the Assyrians, most of the Israeli population was deported, and Israel again became a vassal state under a different unknown ruler.

When the city of Samaria was destroyed, the upper classes were deported to Nineveh and Sargon II resettled other people in the captured territory. According to the Hebrew Scriptures, the exiles were resettled in Halah, Gozan, and in the towns of the Medes. (2 Kings 17:6) With the exception of one priest who was permitted to return,<sup>11</sup> they were successfully integrated into the Assyrian Empire and ceased to exist as part of the traditional Hebrew nation. These became known as the “ten lost tribes” of Israel. The Israelites that remained intermarried with other people who settled in the area. Most scholars agree they became the Samaritan population that still exists today. Although other theories exist in the attempt to explain the disappearance of the “ten lost tribes” as part of the Hebrew nation, most are without evidence and are perhaps given with ulterior motives.

Some scholars have suggested that these deported peoples fled Assyrian rule and migrated to the Americas, perhaps because of the Mormon belief that the Native Americans were descendants of the Israelites. Most scholars disagree with this theory due to the lack of archaeological evidence to support it. Other scholars have proposed the Israelites migrated to the British Isles to start the British Empire as the new Promised Land. Again, no archaeological evidence to date supports this theory. Some people must have fled to Jerusalem as the population exploded from 5,000 to 25,000 inhabitants. There is also archaeological evidence that shows the appearance of settlements in the Judean hills at this time in Hezekiah’s rule.

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<sup>11</sup> 2 Kings 17:24-33



Sargon II continued his expedition, invading Syria and Phoenicia (the Philistine city-states). Later, several Phoenician city-states revolted again. Sargon II returned, defeated them, and laid siege to Tyre for five years. After failing in their attempt to capture them by sea (a huge embarrassment to the Assyrians as the ratio of ships was largely in their favor), the Assyrians cut off rivers and aqueducts that served as the city's water supply. The Tyrians continued to sustain the siege by drinking water from wells they dug within the city walls. This battle of endurance shows the great determination of the Assyrian kings to maintain control of their vassal states competing with the vassal states' struggle for autonomy.

In 705 BCE, Sargon II was assassinated and his son Sennacherib came to power; immediately another massive revolt broke out as several western Assyrian protectorates once again rebelled in the continued desire for autonomy. It began in Babylonia by a man named Merodachbaladan who led a coalition comprised of Arameans, Elamites, and Babylonian ethnic groups. [Roberts, 1997] Sennacherib spent four years subduing the insurrection in Babylonia. While Sennacherib was busy in Babylonia, King Luli of Sidon, King Sidqia of Ashkelon, and King Hezekiah of Judah intervened in Philistine affairs by assisting local rebels to overthrow Padi, the pro-Assyrian king of Ekron. Egypt also gave its support in hopes of regaining control over territories and trade routes lost to Tilglath-Pileser III and Sargon II. Hezekiah imprisoned Padi in Jerusalem and appealed to the Ethiopian king of Egypt for additional support despite the objections of Isaiah<sup>12</sup>, his advisor and prophet of YHWH, who believed the conspiracy would bring about Judah's demise at the hands of the Assyrians. [Pritchard,

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<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 30:1-5, 31:1-3

1955; Wright, 1957; Roberts, 1997; Shanks, 1999] This sequence of events is recorded in both the Hebrew and Assyrian texts, with the exception of Isaiah's role, which is only recorded in Hebrew Scriptures.

Sennacherib reacted immediately and attacked the revolting kingdoms. Fearing Assyrian retribution, the Phoenician city-states surrendered without a fight and Luli fled to Cyprus. Ashkelon surrendered and Sennacherib deported Sidqia to Nineveh. Ekron was recaptured, Padi was reinstated as king, and the local rebel officials were killed. Sennacherib "...hung their bodies on poles surrounding the city..." as a warning against further rebellion (Pritchard, 1955, 288). All the kings of Amurru, including the Transjordan states of Ammon, Moab, and Edom heeded the warning and submitted once again to Assyrian rule. With the surrounding territories pacified, Sennacherib turned to invade Judah from the south—the only mountain pass to Jerusalem. [Pritchard, 1955; Bible, 1988]

Sometime during the rebellion, Hezekiah began preparing for a siege of Jerusalem. As part of this preparation, he commanded that an underground tunnel be dug from the Spring of Gihon to the Pool of Siloam as a water source for the city; a siege would cut off access to all known water sources. He enclosed the tunnel entrance within the city's fortifications in the southwest corner. This innovative project took several years; it commenced from both ends and miraculously met somewhere in the middle. A message was engraved, traditionally thought by Isaiah, twenty-five feet from the Siloam end of the tunnel. This important discovery has become a means by which archaeologists may date other writings. Only six lines on the lower part remain:

[...when] (the tunnel) was driven through. And this is the way  
in which it was cut through:--While [...] (were) still (...)

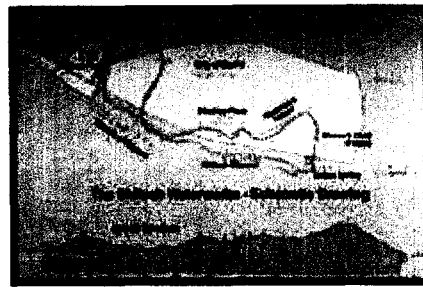
axe(s), each man toward his fellow, and while there were still three cubits to be cut through, [there was heard] the voice of a man calling to his fellow, for there was *an overlap* in the rock on the right (and on the left). And when the tunnel was driven through, the quarrymen hewed (the rock), each man toward his fellow, axe against axe; and the water flowed from the spring toward the reservoir for 1,200 cubits, and the height of the rock above the head(s) of the quarrymen was 100 cubits.

#### Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 321



Hezekiah's tunnel in Jerusalem

Wright, 1957



<http://www.israel-mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH00x10>



Istanbul Museum

British explorers and surveyors confirmed this distance of 1200 cubits. Although Ernest Wright recorded the external distance "as the crow flies" at 900 feet, the tunnel measures approximately 1707 feet. This figure agrees "with the Siloam inscription, the cubit being a measure slightly less than 18 inches in length" (171). (Wright, 1957) However long it took to tunnel out over 1700 feet of rock, it was finished by the time Sennacherib's army had arrived at Jerusalem.

As Sennacherib's army approached, Hezekiah consulted with his officials and military staff about plugging up the springs outside the city. A large group of men gathered from the city to block all the springs and streams that fed the surrounding areas; this cut off any external water source for Sennacherib's army or Jerusalem. [2 Chronicles 32:3-4, 12, Isaiah 22:9,11] These battle tactics show the completion of the tunnel by this time and its use as the city's only water source. He had large numbers of shields and weapons made and began storing food and other supplies. He also repaired the broken sections of the wall, built towers on it, and built a second wall outside the first. [2 Chronicles 32:5]

Hezekiah managed to retain Judah, but paid a hefty price for defying Assyrian authority. While the Hebrew Scriptures merely mention that Sennacherib laid siege to all the fortified cities in Judah, Sennacherib's accounts are much more detailed:

As to Hezekiah, the Jew [rather Judean], he did not submit to my yoke, I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and to countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered (them) by means of well-stamped (earth-)ramps, and battering-rams brought near (to the walls), (combined with) the attack of foot soldiers (using) mines, breeches as well as sapper work. I drove out (of them) 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting, and considered (them) booty. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird cage. I surrounded him with earthwork in order to molest those who were leaving his city's gate. His towns which I had plundered, I took away from his country and gave them to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Sillibel, king of Gaza. Thus I reduced his country, but I still increased the tribute and the *katru*-presents (due) to me (as his) overlord which I imposed (later) upon him beyond the former tribute, to be delivered annually. Hezekiah himself, whom the terror-inspiring splendor of my lordship had overwhelmed and those irregular and elite troops which he had brought into Jerusalem, his royal residence, in order to strengthen (it),

had deserted, did send me, later, to Nineveh, my lordly city, together with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, precious stones, antimony, large cuts of red stone, couches (inlaid) with ivory, *nimedu*-chairs (inlaid) with ivory, elephant hides, ebony-wood, boxwood (and) all kinds of valuable treasures, his (own) daughters, concubines, male and female musicians. In order to deliver the tribute and to do obeisance as a slave he sent his (personal) messenger.

#### Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 288

The Assyrian accounts describe conquering Judah as the result of military might and the superiority of Asshur, their patron deity. The Hebrew Scriptures portray Judah's downfall as the result of Hezekiah's lack of trust and obedience to YHWH. Either way, Hezekiah lost control of much of Judah. By the end of the campaign, only Jerusalem remained intact. The events from the completion of the tunnel to the departure of the Assyrian army are unclear in both the Assyrian and Hebrew texts. Although several theories exist, further archaeological evidence is needed to concretely determine this sequence of events.

Although the sequence and dating in both the Assyrian and Hebrew accounts is unclear, confrontation between the two factions was certain as it was atypical of the Assyrian kings to allow a rebel king or ruler to remain in power. The first of the theories is the dual-campaign theory. According to this theory, Sennacherib's surviving inscriptions refer to the 701 BCE campaign, which ended in the reduction of Judah to vassalage. The second campaign would have been a separate rebellion in the West led by Hezekiah and supported by Tirhakeh of Egypt. This rebellion would be placed after the Babylonians and the Elamites defeated the Assyrian army in 691 BCE. Sennacherib would have launched it after his capture of Babylonia in 689 BCE. Though inventive, the dual-campaign theory does not inspire confidence as the confusion with the Biblical

account only resides in the final section (2 Kings 18:17-19:34). [Shanks, 1999] The opening summary closely corroborates the Assyrian account. This theory also possesses a major flaw in that it sets the date for Lachish later than archaeological evidence suggests. Exact dating is important for the chain of events and validity of sources to be known. The dating of the destruction of Lachish, the last and largest fortress on the mountain pass to Jerusalem, is key in setting a closer date for the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian army. The destruction of Jerusalem cannot be used as evidence since Jerusalem was not razed until the Babylonian conquest c.588 BCE. Therefore, the exact dating of the destruction of Lachish is the closest measurement to set a date for the Jerusalem siege by the Assyrians.

Tel Lachish is divided into seven archaeological levels, or time periods: from the thirteenth century to the fourth century BCE (see Appendix A). In discussing the data for the destruction of Lachish by Sennacherib, Levels VII, VI, & II can be eliminated. Level VI was a Canaanite city that was destroyed in the twelfth century BCE; Level VII is dated prior to that. Level II represents the latest Judean city that was destroyed by the Babylonians c.588 BCE. This leaves three possibilities for the destruction of Lachish by the Assyrians: Levels III, IV, and V.

Level V was an unfortified city characterized by tenth century pottery. Level IV came to a sudden end, but not by fire. Usually, when a major city was defeated, it was burned after it was plundered and its occupants deported as shown in Assyrian texts. It is assumed that Sennacherib burnt the city after it was conquered as it is clear from the reliefs that he considered its defeat a major accomplishment. Although the Lachish reliefs show no record of razing Lachish, scholars and archaeologists speculate the

unpreserved upper section contained this depiction. Furthermore, the city walls and gate continue to function in Level III. Some Level IV structures were also rebuilt in Level III while many fortifications remained intact. These evidences point to a continuation of life without a break, not a city that was stormed and utterly destroyed in an Assyrian siege. [Ussishkin, 1979]

The findings of Level III reveal a strong fortress completely destroyed by fire. The palace-fort was razed to its foundations and the city walls were burnt to the ground. Houses were found burnt and buried under the debris. Massive numbers of arrowheads, crushed pottery, and utensils littered the ground. A mass grave located outside the city wall contains a large number of human and animal bones jumbled together along with pottery shards common to household ruins. It appears this mass grave was created to bury what was cleaned out of the city after its destruction due to the high proportion of young and few old, signs of burning, and the jumbled manner in which they are buried. [Wright, 1957] In addition, Jewish custom forbids the consumption of pork which make up a large majority of the animal bones found in the grave. The bones are possibly the remains of the animals that fed the Assyrian soldiers. Amidst all this destruction, there is no evidence of reconstruction or sign of attempts by the inhabitants to retrieve their belongings.

The evidence indicates that Level III is the level that corresponds with the destruction of Lachish by the Assyrian army. The dating of Level III now becomes important in order to settle the campaign debate. In order to support the dual-campaign theory, the dating of Lachish Level III is argued to be post-689 BCE while the single-campaign theories claim the date of destruction to be 701 BCE. Although a third

possible destruction date of 597 BCE is argued, there is little evidence internal to Lachish to support the hypothesis.

It should be recognized, however, that some prominent scholars, notably Dame Kathleen Kenyon, A.D. Tushingham, and J.S. Holladay, date Level III at 597 BCE on the basis of evidence external to Lachish. That would place the Assyrian campaign against Lachish little over a decade before Jerusalem's destruction by the Persians. [Ussishkin, 1979] This hypothesis does not make sense in the context of the Lachish dig alone without even adding the dissent of the Hebrew and Assyrian records. The main internal evidence against a destruction date of 597 BCE lies in the pottery uncovered at the Lachish dig.

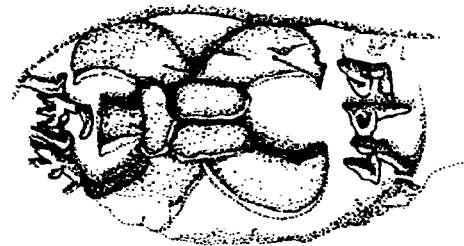
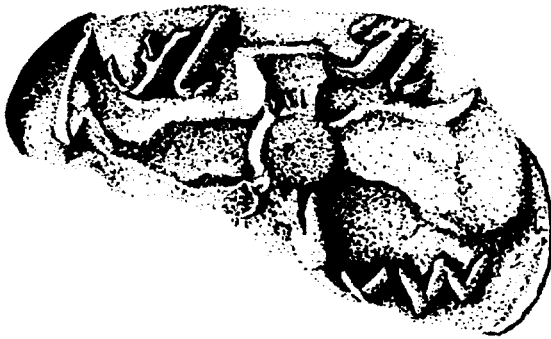
Pottery was discovered in two storerooms in the city gate area, one at Level II and one at Level III. The pottery from Level II clearly differs from Level III. Scholars such as Olga Tufnell and Yohanan Aharoni argue that as pottery styles take longer than a mere decade to change, 597 BCE cannot be the correct destruction date. Although this debate continues, the major controversy remains between 701 BCE and post-689 BCE. [Ussishkin, 1979] Seal impressions found at the site make up the deciding evidence between these two dates.

Over 300 of the 1200+ existing seal impressions were found in Lachish Level III; the remaining seals were uncovered at different sites. There are two types: the two-winged scarab and the four-winged scarab. Most of these stamps are four-winged scarabs with the inscription lmlk ("Belonging to the king") and the name of one of four



cities<sup>13</sup>. All seals are dated to the time of Hezekiah. The meaning of two-winged scarab seals remained a mystery until 1999.

In 1986 a damaged two-winged seal was published but it was too fragmentary for scholars to reconstruct the inscription. In 1999 a complete two-winged seal impression was found. The inscription reads "Belonging to Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, King of Judah" and so appears to be Hezekiah's personal seal. [Shanks, 1999]



Two-winged royal seal (left), four-winged stamp (right) Ussishkin, 1979

The seals are most likely part of a centralized distribution program before the Assyrian invasion (perhaps in preparation for it). Clay analysis recently determined the seals were all manufactured at the same site. Theoretically, Hezekiah organized Judah into four administration districts for the distribution of supplies. The large number found in one storeroom strengthens the assumption of their function prior to or in preparation for an invasion. [Shanks, 1999]

The combination of dating the four-winged scarab seals to Hezekiah's time and Hezekiah's personal identification on the two-winged scarab seals places the seal impressions, and the destruction date of Lachish Level III, solidly within the reign of

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<sup>13</sup> Hebron, Sochoch, Ziph, or mmst (The name mmst is not known from any other source, and its exact pronunciation is unclear). [Ussishkin, 1979]

Hezekiah. The dual-campaign destruction date of post-689 BCE is undermined as Hezekiah's date of death is set at 697 BCE. This information leaves variations of the single-campaign theory the only viable solutions to Sennacherib's campaign controversy.

There are many subtheories of the single campaign theory based on the confusion of the events and dialogue in 2 Kings 18:17-19:34 and missing or incomplete data from existing Assyrian accounts. Some scholars believe Rabshakeh, Sennacherib's spokesman, made the journey to Jerusalem twice—once from Lachish and once from Libnah. The prevailing view however, is that the second section of the Biblical account (2 Kings 19:8-34) is a composite of two versions of one round of negotiations.

The first version, 2 Kings 18:17-19:7, appears to be older than the second section with less elaboration in the prophetic and Deuteronomistic traditions. It reports Rabshakeh's attempt to intimidate Jerusalem, Hezekiah's reaction, and Isaiah's reassurance. The second version, 2 Kings 19:8-34, appears to have been written at a later time. It tells the same basic story, but with much more literary elaboration deriving from prophetic traditions and a Deuteronomic compiler. The second version originated from a poetic oracle of Isaiah (19:20-28), a prophetic sign of reassurance (19:29-31), and a prose oracle claiming the salvation of the city (19:31-34). The Deuteronomic compiler's style is most evident in the language of Hezekiah's prayer. [Shanks, 1999]

Flavius Josephus, a first century A.D. Jewish Roman historian, presents a third theory that best collaborates the Hebrew and Assyrian accounts as well as the archaeological evidence. In his account, Sennacherib defeated all the fortified cities of

Judah. He demolished Lachish, Judah's second largest city, and razed it to the ground. When he was ready to march against Jerusalem, Hezekiah sent ambassadors promising to submit to Assyrian rule and pay whatever tribute Sennacherib set. Sennacherib agreed and Hezekiah stripped the temple of YHWH and emptied his treasuries. The Assyrian king took the tribute and left to fight the Egyptians and Ethiopians, but—contrary to his promise of peace—left Rabshakeh with a large army to destroy the city.

There were two other officers present other than Rabshakeh: Tartan the Viceroy and Rabsaris the Chief Eunuch. Both these men had regular military and diplomatic duties. Rabshakeh was the Chief Cupbearer to Sennacherib, which makes him the highest-ranking domestic official. Despite this, he was the spokesman for the Assyrians, instead of attending to matters in Nineveh in Sennacherib's absence. The presence of the highest ranking domestic official is a good indication that, since part of Sennacherib's intimidation strategy required someone who spoke the local language, we can safely assume that neither Tartan, Rabsaris, nor the ranking officers spoke Hebrew. [Josephus, 1987; Bible, 1988]

Rabshakeh's army pitched camp and he began the diplomatic taunting with Hezekiah's emissaries. He spoke in Hebrew, not Aramaic, which was the international language of the time, and raised his voice so that it carried to the people on the wall. Hezekiah was informed of everything Rabshakeh said and immediately consulted Isaiah, his advisor and a YHWH prophet. Hezekiah solidified Judah's relationship with YHWH who then promised through an oracle that the Assyrians would be beaten without a fight.

About this time, Sennacherib sent a letter to Hezekiah in an effort to break his resistance. Hezekiah sent no response and continued to pray to YHWH. Hezekiah's fear is understandable; the population of Jerusalem was considerably lower than the Assyrian army on the other side of the wall that consisted of 185,000 fighting men [The Bible, 1988]. Assyrian inscriptions record that out of 46 "strong cities, walled forts, and...countless small villages in the vicinity" 200,150 people were deported [Pritchard, 1955]. Assyrians generally deported all upper & middle class people and any remaining soldiers (who were not killed) to be assimilated by resettlement elsewhere. Only the lowest classes of people remained. [Roberts, 1997] If a little over 200,000 people were deported from Judah, including women and children, it is safe to say that Jerusalem could not have had the manpower to fight the Assyrian army. In fact, the Hebrew text records the Assyrian field commander telling the Hebrews to make peace with the Assyrians, that reliance on Egypt is foolish, and that he (Hezekiah) cannot even mount 2,000 horsemen if the Assyrians provided the horses. At this point, Hezekiah's only hope of survival was divine intervention; he knew what happened to unsuccessful rebellious leaders under Assyrian rule. While Hezekiah was holding against Rabshakeh, Sennacherib was marching against his ally, Tirhakeh of Egypt, in the south.

Sennacherib laid siege to Pelusium, the fortress that guards the approaches to Egypt at the border. [Shanks, 1975; Josephus, 1987] When the ramps were completed and he was ready to begin the assault, news reached him that Tirhakeh was approaching with a vast army. Sennacherib uncharacteristically disbanded the siege and returned to Judah. [Josephus, 1987] Herodotus, a fifth century BCE Greek historian, offers an explanation for Sennacherib's uncharacteristic retreat. He writes that

the night before the battle, “thousands of field mice swarmed over the Assyrians during the night, and ate their quivers, their bowstrings, and the leather handles of the shields so that on the following day, having no arms to fight with, they abandoned their position and suffered severe retreat.” Sennacherib returned to Jerusalem to find “all the fighting men and the leaders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king” dead (2 Chronicles 32:21). Interestingly enough, there is no argument among scholars and theologians as to whether or not 185,000 men died; the argument lies in how it happened. Regardless, the fact that Hezekiah continued to live despite his rebellion to the Assyrian Empire indicates that an event occurred which made it impossible for Sennacherib to defeat Hezekiah. So far, the Hebrew Scriptures provide the only existing theory and scholars have focused on attempting to explain the death of Sennacherib’s men in tangible terms.

Josephus quoted Berosus, the Chaldean, who claimed the men died of a pestilential distemper—meaning a highly contagious or infectious viral epidemic disease that is devastating and marked by a rapid, severe, and malignant course. This type of plague can be further understood by examining Thucydides’ description of a similar plague that occurred during the Peloponnesian War:

...they died like flies. The bodies of the dying were heaped one on top of the other, and half-dead creatures could be seen staggering about in the streets or flocking around the fountains in their desire for water. The temples in which they took up their quarters were full of the dead bodies of people who had died inside them. For the catastrophe was so overwhelming that men, not knowing what would happen next to them, became indifferent to every rule of religion or of law. All funeral ceremonies which used to be observed were now disorganized, and they buried the dead as best they could. Many people, lacking the necessary means of burial because so many deaths had already occurred in their

households, adopted the most shameless methods. They would arrive first at a funeral pyre that had been made by others, put their own dead on it and set it alight; or, finding another pyre burning, they would throw the corpse that they were carrying on top of the other one and go away."

#### The Peloponnesian War, 126

It is possible, however unlikely, that this plague originated with Sennacherib's men or that it is the same plague recirculating. Thucydides does not sound positive of the disease's origin when he writes: "The plague originated, so they say, in Ethiopia in upper Egypt, and spread from there into Egypt itself and Libya and much of the territory of the king of Persia. In the city of Athens it appeared suddenly..." (123).

It is possible that this might be a mutated form of the same plague Sennacherib's men died from, but that means it reappeared some 200 years later. It cannot be the exact same plague if the Hebrew account is correct because while all of Sennacherib's men died in one night, the incubation period for the plague that Thucydides described was seven to eight days long.

The Hebrew Scriptures attribute the death of Sennacherib's men to the angel of the LORD (2 Chronicles 32:21, 2 Kings 19:35). In the Hebrew Scriptures, the angel of the LORD has many roles; one of those roles is as an agent of destruction or judgement. This takes several forms: plagues, the death of an individual, or death by unexplainable phenomena based on the information available.<sup>14</sup> It is possible that the angel of the LORD took the form of the plague Berosus described in his account.

Sennacherib never mentions this mass destruction in his annals (however I have yet to see a ruler who would personally document such a disgrace for posterity).

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<sup>14</sup> Exodus 12, Numbers 16:41-50, 2 Samuel 24:15-16, Acts 12:53

Instead he focused on how he trapped Hezekiah in Jerusalem for a time and imposed a tribute on him:

Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird cage. I surrounded him with earthwork in order to molest those who were leaving his city's gate. His towns which I had plundered, I took away from his country and gave them to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Sillibel, king of Gaza. Thus I reduced his country, but I still increased the tribute and the *katru*-presents (due) to me (as his) overlord which I imposed (later) upon him beyond the former tribute, to be delivered annually.

Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 1955

Neither side mentions whether or not the tribute was actually honored after Sennacherib returned to Nineveh. However, for the first time Sennacherib does not report deporting a defeated people along with their belongings. He makes no mention of what was done to the rebel officials whereas all previous rebel officials were killed, deported, or fled before the Assyrian army arrived. The fact that Hezekiah continued to live, much less in Jerusalem as King, alludes to the fact that an event did occur which made it impossible for Sennacherib to defeat Hezekiah. The Assyrian kings were not in the habit of allowing rebelliousness to go unpunished.

Whatever the cause, when Sennacherib returned from Egypt and found 185,000 dead men, he retreated to Nineveh with the remainder of his forces. He returned to his capital city in disgrace where he remained until his death. He was eventually murdered by his two eldest sons, Adrammelech and Seraser, while worshipping in the temple of Nisroch. Adrammelech and Seraser fled to Armenia, the land of Ararat, while Esarhaddon (also known as Assarachaddas) succeeded the Assyrian throne. The death

of Sennacherib marked the end of the height of the Assyrian Empire and the beginning of its decline.

*While no event in history can be concretely studied due to the biases of scholars and incomplete or lack of information, it is possible to make reasonable guesses as to what occurred during a given period of time by examining the existing evidence. While no primary source is objective due to the influences and prejudices of the writers, much can be learned about the past from these documents with an objective mind and knowledge of past and present exaggerations, influences, and biases (of both scholars and primary writers).*

*The Assyrian, Hebrew, and archaeological sources provide a myriad of evidence about events which took place during the height of the Assyrian Empire. However, these sources neglect to definitively answer many questions historians are posing. One especially concerning area of contention is the chronology of events. Sometimes sources appear to contradict each other, but since the information is at times ambiguous or incomplete in terms of chronology, it is difficult to discern whether the sources negate each other in crucial areas. While much can be derived from archaeological, Hebrew, and Assyrian sources, there remains information, events, and chronology that are controversial due to missing or incomplete information and source biases.*

*The Assyrian reliefs, both in text and pictorial form, provide concrete evidence of the types of weaponry and warfare that were used by the Assyrians. Chariots, siege machines, siege ramps, and arrows were weaponry confirmed by archaeological digs. Text reliefs also present whom the Assyrians considered allies, enemies, and vassal states.*

*The Assyrian pictorial reliefs also provide visual images of events from their viewpoint. It is this viewpoint, however, that biases the information. No surviving Assyrian relief records a defeat, although outside sources provide this information. Victories, however, are recorded with great detail.*

*The Assyrian sources give possible evidence for the assimilation of peoples in the form of many different ethnic divisions in the army and the deportation and replacement of the captured populations. The pictorial reliefs depict different dress, beard, and hairstyles and text reliefs describe the addition of armies from the defeated peoples to the Assyrian ranks. The text reliefs also record the deportation or exile of nonloyal or captured people and the importation of loyal peoples.*

*Problems with the Assyrian records include exaggerated, missing, incomplete, or weathered records. One example of exaggeration is that historians believe Assyrian scribes frequently added a zero to the end of a number when recording captives, booty, etc in the records. Gaps in records sometimes make it difficult to place events on a time continuum, much less form a complete picture of the event. Some examples include the unbalanced recording of Assyrian victories and defeats. No records of defeats in Assyrian texts exist, and all victories are directly or indirectly attributed to the deity Asshur. While the Assyrian records are full of religious overtones, their religion did not appear to have an impact on the outcome of events as in the Hebrew tradition.*



*The Hebrew records are focused around their loyalty, or lack thereof, to the deity YHWH. This loyalty does not appear to skew their records, but it does provide an excuse for the successes and failures of the Hebrews. The accounts are always told in the context of the degree of loyalty to YHWH. If the loyalty is strong, events are favorable; if the loyalty is weak or nonexistent, events are not favorable.*

*The Hebrew texts record victories and defeats at the hands of other nations. It also provides concrete evidences of their alliances and enemies as well as its status in terms of autonomy or vassal to another country.*

*Although Hebrew texts provide supporting if not concrete evidence for battles, invasions, and periods of exile, chronology is sometimes sketchy due to missing data and interpretation of the different styles in composing and compiling Hebrew Scriptures.*

*The final difficulty with the Hebrew source is the narrow focus on Israel and Judah. Since the focus is on these two political factions, records of other nations exist only in relation to their impact on Israel and Judah.*

*Archaeology has confirmed or provided some of the Assyrian and Hebrew sources. The difficulty with this type of evidence is in translating and dating the evidences found. Ordering the events of a civilization based strictly on archaeology can be difficult as dating is tricky. Archaeologists have dated various objects and texts, but only in approximations as there is no method currently available which dates with complete accuracy.*

*Archaeology provides insight into the lifestyles, cultures, and events of a time period. Objects such as pottery, arrowheads, seals, weaponry, and siege ramps all provide clues to the culture of a civilization which are not otherwise available through primary documentation.*

*These documents and artifacts provide a glimpse into the events of history. Despite the obstacles of incomplete, weathered, exaggerated, biased, or missing information and our current inability to accurately date artifacts, it is possible to make reasonable hypotheses concerning the events of the past. Like all educated guesses, however, theories will be argued and new evidence will change current theories and arguments.*

## Appendix A

<u>LEVEL</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENTS</u>	<u>MAJOR FINDS</u>
Level I	2 <sup>nd</sup> Cent BCE	★ Hellenistic Kingdoms established throughout Near East	
	4 <sup>th</sup> Cent BCE	★ Alexander the Great defeats Darius III at the Battle of Issos (333 BCE) Persian Empire falls	➤ Solar Shrine ➤ Fortified city wall & gate
	6 <sup>th</sup> Cent BCE	★ Persian Empire established (Achaemenid dynasty—c. 550-331 BCE)	➤ Palace (“The Residency”)
Level II	Early 6 <sup>th</sup> Cent BCE	★ Babylonians conquer southern Kingdom of Judah (588/6 BCE) Lachish destroyed	➤ Fortified city, city wall & gate, “Lachish letters”, Palace-fort in ruins
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Half 7 <sup>th</sup> Cent BCE	★ Assyrian Empire falls to Babylonians (612 BCE)	
	701—2 <sup>nd</sup> half 7 <sup>th</sup> Cent BCE	BREAK IN HABITATION	
Level III	8 <sup>th</sup> Cent BCE	★ Lachish destroyed (701 BCE)	➤ Assyrian siege ramp ➤ Judean counter-ramp
		★ Assyrians conquer Northern Kingdom (722 BCE)	➤ Fortified city with two walls, densely populated, Judean palace –fort (C)
Level IV	9 <sup>th</sup> Cent BCE	★ Kingdoms of Israel & Judah established	➤ Judean palace-fort (B) ➤ Two city walls and gates
		★ Rise of Assyrian Empire	
Level V	10 <sup>th</sup> Cent BCE	★ Pharaoh Shishak invades Israel (c. 925 BCE)	
		★ Lachish destroyed	➤ Judean palace-fort (A)
		★ Solomon dies; United Monarchy ends. (930 BCE)	
	END OF 12 <sup>th</sup> Cent—11 <sup>th</sup> Cent	BREAK IN HABITATION	

Level VI	12 <sup>th</sup> Cent BCE	★ Lachish destroyed by invading Israelites or the “Sea People” (2 <sup>nd</sup> half 12 <sup>th</sup> Cent BCE)	➤ Acropolis Temple (Fosse Temple—abandoned)
		★ Egyptians control Canaan, including Lachish	➤ Monumental Public Building
		★ Reign of Pharaoh Ramesses III (c. 1182—1151 BCE)	➤ Unfortified city
Level VII	13 <sup>th</sup> Cent BCE	★ Egyptians control Canaan	➤ Ramesses III cartouche
			➤ Fosse Temple III, Domestic building in unfortified city

## Appendix B

### 2 Chronicles 29:3-10

(3) In the first month of the first year of his reign, he opened the doors of the temple of the Lord and repaired them.

(4) He brought in the priests and the Levites, assembled them in the square on the east side (5) and said: "Listen to me, Levites! Consecrate yourselves now and consecrate the temple of the Lord, the God of your fathers. Remove all defilement from the sanctuary. (6) Our fathers were unfaithful; they did evil in the eyes of the Lord our God and forsook him. They turned their faces away from the Lord's dwelling place and turned their backs on him. (7) They also shut the doors of the portico and put out the lamps. They did not burn incense or present any burnt offerings at the sanctuary to the God of Israel. (8) Therefore, the anger of the Lord has fallen on Judah and Jerusalem; he has made them an object of dread and horror and scorn, as you can see with your own eyes. (9) This is why our fathers have fallen by the sword and why our sons and daughters and our wives are in captivity. (10) Now I intend to make a covenant with the Lord, the God of Israel, so that his fierce anger will turn away from us.

Appendix C

Lachish Reliefs from Ninevah  
(Shanks, 1984)



Slab 1

Slab 2



Slab 3

Slab 4

Slab 5



Slab 6

Slab 7

Slab 8



Slab 9

Slab 10

Slab 11

Slab 12

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